

THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN.

PUBLISHED ONCE A FORTNIGHT.

PRICE ONE DOLLAR, IN ADVANCE.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN."—LUKE 11. 14.

VOL. I.]

BROOKLYN, (CONN.) NOVEMBER 19, 1823.

[No. 18.]

THE publication of this number of the *LIBERAL CHRISTIAN* has been unavoidably delayed to the present time, by the absence and engagements of the Editor. He trusts there will be no other interruption of his labors, until the completion of the first volume in February next. It is his intention to continue this publication another year, and he begs leave to give this timely notice that, *all the present subscribers will be considered as continuing their subscription for another year, unless they make known their intention to the contrary, by the first of January next.*

Those who have not paid their subscription for the present year, are requested to do so immediately.

All communications should be addressed to the Editor, post paid.

INSTALLATION IN BROOKLYN.

On Wednesday Nov. 5, the Rev. Samuel Joseph May was installed Pastor of the First Church and Society in this town. The following churches were represented in the council either by their Pastors or Delegates, namely, Rev. Dr. Bancroft's of Worcester; Rev. Dr. Freeman's, Rev. Dr. Channing's Rev. Dr. Lowell's Rev. Mr. Ware's, Rev. Mr. Parkman's Rev. Mr. Pierpont's of Boston; Rev. Dr. Thayer's of Lancaster; Rev. Mr. Edes' of Providence; Rev. Mr. Willson's of Petersham; Rev. Mr. Walker's of Charleston; Rev. Mr. Peabody's of Springfield. They assembled at 9 A. M. in the Court House. Dr. Bancroft was chosen Moderator and implored the divine blessing and direction. Dr. Lowell was then chosen scribe and the Council proceeded to business. The invitation of the Society and Mr. May's acceptance of that invitation, together with a vote of the Church which constituted him a member, were read to them. At the request of some individuals on the council, the pastor elect then exhibited a general statement of his religious opinions. Those parts of this statement which relate to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement will be given below.

A written communication, which had just been handed in, was then read by the Scribe. It proved to be a remonstrance from the Rev. Dr. Whitney, the former Pastor of this Society, against the Council's proceeding to install Rev. Mr. May. After a respectful con-

sideration of this remonstrance, the Council voted to file this with their other papers* and to proceed to the installation. Rev. Mr. Willson of Petersham was appointed to make the introductory prayer; the council concurred in the choice of the Rev. Mr. Walker of Charlestown to preach the sermon;—Rev. Dr. Bancroft of Worcester was appointed to make the consecrating prayer; Rev. Dr. Freeman of Boston to deliver the charge; Rev. Mr. Peabody of Springfield to give the Right hand of fellowship; Rev. Dr. Thayer of Lancaster to address the people; Rev. Mr. Parkman of Boston to make the concluding prayer.

At 11 o'clock the Council proceeded to the Meeting house, where a large audience had already assembled. The performances were remarkably adapted to the occasion, and calculated to give solemnity to the scene and to touch the feelings of every one present. We hope and believe they will all be published, and we are confident the impression, that was made at the time of their delivery, will be heightened by the perusal of them.

The following hymns were sung during the services.

HYMN, 433 *New York Collection.*

Great God! the followers of thy Son,
We bow before thy mercy-seat,
To worship thee, the Holy One,
And pour our wishes at thy feet.

O grant thy blessing here to day!
O give thy people joy and peace!
The tokens of thy love display,
And favor, that shall never cease.

*The Council learnt, on enquiry, that no notice had been given to the Church and Society about to settle Mr. May, that such a remonstrance was to be laid in, and no person appeared to support it. It appeared also that the *Church of the first Society* in Brooklyn had concurred unanimously in the choice of Mr. May, and certainly no other Church can have any voice in his settlement. And as to the Rev. Dr. Whitney, it is well known, that a suit instituted in his name, against the First Society in Brooklyn for the payment of his Salary, was prosecuted before the Superior Court in Brooklyn, last September, and decided against him, on the ground that he had abandoned said Society.

We seek the truth which Jesus brought ;
His path of light, we long to tread ;
Here be his holy doctrines taught,
And here, their purest influence shed.

May faith, and hope, and love abound ;
Our sins and errors be forgiven ;
And we, in thy great day, be found
Children of God, and heirs of heaven.

—♦—
HYMN, by the Rev. Mr. Pierpont.

*Written for the Ordination of the Rev. W.
Ware at New York.*

O Thou who art above all height !
Our God, our Father, and our Friend !
Beneath thy throne of love and light,
Let thine adoring children bend.
We kneel in praise,—that here is set
A vine that by thy culture grew ;
We kneel in prayer, that thou would'st wet
Its opening leaves with heavenly dew.
Since thy young servant now hath given
Himself, his powers, his hopes, his youth,
To the great cause of truth and Heaven ;
Be thou his guide, O God of truth !
Here may his doctrines drop like rain,
His speech like Hermon's dew distil,
Till green fields smile, and golden grain,
Ripe for the harvest waits thy will.
And when he sinks in death ; by care,
Or pain, or toil, or years oppress ;
O God ! remember then our prayer,
And take his spirit to thy rest.

—♦—
**EXTRACT FROM HIS VIEWS OF CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINE, READ AT THE INSTALLATION OF
MR. MAY.**

It may be proper on this occasion, that I should declare my belief concerning the person of our Saviour, and the efficacy of his death.

To me it does not appear, from the histories we have of his life and preaching, that Jesus ever took pains to give any account of his nature, whatever there may have been peculiar to him in this respect. This, I think, he would in mercy have done, if a particular belief respecting his nature were to be essential to the salvation of man. In his official capacity only, as Saviour of the world, did he shew any solicitude to be known, and received. To this object he devoted his whole life—for this purpose he died upon the cross. Now I think, if we are well assured that he came by divine commission and taught with

divine authority, and that he has power to save us on the conditions he has offered ; if we are well assured of these things, it may be a matter of interesting inquiry what his nature is, but cannot be of vital importance.

He claimed to be, and I joyfully believe that he was, a messenger from God—that the father sanctified him and sent him into the world—that the words which he spake he spake not of himself, but as his father taught and commanded him—that the works he did and the doctrines he taught were not his, but the father's.

Moreover he claimed to be, and I sincerely believe he was, superior to all other inspired teachers. All before him had come as servants of God ; he came as the dearly beloved Son of God, from the bosom of his father.

As to the death of Christ, I believe that it was all-important in the gospel plan of redemption. He died to confirm the truth of his doctrines—he died to teach his followers how to bear suffering—he died that he might rise again and bring immortality to light.—There may have been some other efficacy in his death, but this has been and is a subject of dispute between the wisest & best of men, & surely I may be pardoned if I plead ignorance.

Of one thing however I am fully convinced, whatever may have been the efficacy of Christ's death, no one can derive any benefit from it, unless he complies, as far as he is able, with those conditions, on which the blessings of the gospel are promised. Instead then of perplexing our minds with subjects of misty speculation, it will be much wiser and safer for us to inquire what these conditions of salvation are, and endeavor to fulfil them. And what we have to do is plainly stated. We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and piously ; and then, through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, all will be well with us here and hereafter.

—♦—
**CAUTION RECOMMENDED IN THE USE AND AP-
PLICATION OF SCRIPTURE LANGUAGE.**

It must not be dissembled that there are many real difficulties in the christian scriptures, whilst at the same time, more, I believe, and greater, may justly be imputed to certain maxims of interpretation, which have obtained authority without reason, and are received without inquiry. One of these, as I apprehend, is the expecting to find, in the present circumstances of christianity, a meaning

for, or something answering to, every appellation & expression which occurs in scripture; or in other words, the applying to the personal condition of christians at this day, those titles, phrases, propositions and arguments, which belong solely to the situation of christianity at its first institution.

I am aware of an objection which weighs much with many serious tempers, namely, that to suppose any part of scripture to be inapplicable to us, is to suppose a part of scripture to be useless; which seems to detract from the perfection we attribute to these oracles of our salvation. To this I can only answer, that it would have been one of the strangest things in the world, if the writings of the New Testament had not, like all other books, been composed for the apprehension, and consequently adapted to the circumstances, of the persons they were addressed to; and that it would have been equally strange, if the great, and in many respects the inevitable alterations, which have taken place in those circumstances, did not vary the application of scripture language.

I design in the following discourse, to propose some examples of this variation, from which you will judge as I proceed, of the truth and importance of our general observation.

First; at the time the scriptures were written, none were baptized but converts, and none were converted but from conviction, and conviction produced, for the most part, a corresponding reformation of life and manners. Hence baptism was only another name for conversion, and conversion was supposed to be sincere: in this sense was our Saviour's promise, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" and in the same his command to St. Paul, "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins;" this was that baptism, "for the remission of sins," to which St. Peter invited the Jews upon the day of Pentecost; that "washing of regeneration" by which, as St Paul writes to Titus, "he saved us." Now, when we come to speak of the baptism which obtains in most christian churches at present, where no conversion is supposed,* or possible, it is manifest, that, if these expressions be applied at all, they must be applied with extreme qualification and reserve.

Secondly; the community of christians were at first a handful of men, connected amongst themselves by the strictest union, and divided from the rest of the world by a real difference of principle and persuasion, and, what was more observable, by many outward

*Baptism of Infants.

peculiarities of worship and behaviour. This society, considered collectively, and as a body were set apart from the rest of mankind for a more gracious dispensation, as well as actually distinguished by a superior purity of life and conversation. In this view, and in opposition to the unbelieving world, they were denominated in scripture by titles of great seeming dignity and import—they were "elect" "called," "saints;" they were "in Christ" they were "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." That is, these terms were employed to distinguish the professors of christianity from the rest of mankind, in the same manner as the names of Greek and Barbarian, Jew, and Gentile, distinguished the people of Greece and Israel from other nations. The application of such phrases to the whole body of Christians is become now obscure; partly because it is not easy to conceive of Christians as a body at all, by reason of the extent of their name and numbers, and the little visible union that subsists among them; and partly, because the heathen world with whom they were compared, and to which comparison these phrases relate, is now ceased, or is removed from our observation. Supposing therefore, these expressions to have a perpetual meaning, and either forgetting the original use of them, or finding that, at this time, in a great measure exhausted & insignificant, we resort to a sense and an application of them, easier, it may be to our comprehension, but extremely foreign from the design of their authors, namely, to distinguish individuals amongst us, the professors of Christianity from one another: agreeably to which idea, the most flattering of these names, the "elect," "called," "saints" have by bold and unlearned men, been appropriated to themselves and their own party with a presumption and conceit injurious to the reputation of our religion amongst "them that are without," and extremely disgusting to the sober part of its professors; whereas, that such titles were intended in a sense common to all Christian converts, is well argued from many places in which they occur, in which places you may plainly substitute the terms *convert*, or *converted*, for the strongest of these phrases without any alteration of the author's meaning, e. g. "dare any of you go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" "is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised:" "the church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you."

To be continued."

THE DUTY OF PROTESTANTS.

It is the duty of protestants to act in consistency with their avowed principles, and to make progressive improvements in religious knowledge and moral life, corresponding with the light and the means of the age in which they live.

A man of a discriminating and unprejudiced mind, must feel some surprise in reviewing the present state of Christendom. Since the sixteenth century, the highest improvements have been made in all the exact sciences and in general literature. A comparison between that age and this, shows that the progress of the human mind, in the knowledge of personal rights, in the principles of civil government, and in every branch of science and philosophy, has been constant and rapid; and in consequence, society is every where improved and refined. But the systems of school divinity of that period have been handed down through successive generations, to the present time, with a sanction which is due only to the oracles of truth. The great cause is, that those systems are supposed to contain the peculiar doctrines of the reformation; and therefore they are supported by all the veneration which Christians feel towards the men, who at the hazard of every enjoyment of life, and of life itself, freed them from the tyranny and bondage of the Papal Church. But we have clearly seen that the formularies now to be found amongst most denominations of Christians, are not the peculiar doctrines of the reformers. These were common to papists and to protestants.—This fact furnishes no argument to prove them true or false. Papists and protestants hold many important and essential truths of revelation in common; but the fact shows, that these doctrines are entitled to no peculiar favor because they were holden by the reformers. The doctrines of the reformation must be those which distinguished protestants from papists, and which formed the line of separation between them—not those in which they were united. Shall I then be asked, What are the distinguishing marks between the reformers and those whom they opposed? I answer, they relate rather to practical abuses than to speculative errors. I answer in the words of a good writer. "The great points on which the reformation turned, relate chiefly to the power of the clergy, the rights of Christians, and the rule and standard of Christian faith. The great errors

against which the reformers directed their attacks, were the supremacy of the Pope—the derivation of his dignity from St. Peter—his power of forgiving sins—the infallibility of the Church—the authority of traditions, and of decrees of council—the efficacy of indulgences—the miracles and merits of saints—the veneration due to the fathers—the propriety and obligation of monastic vows—the necessity of confession to the priest, and of receiving from him absolution—the power of prayer and alms over the souls in purgatory—the number and efficacy of the sacraments, which it was the province of the clergy to administer; and above all, the propriety of withholding the scriptures from the common people."

That men laboring under all the prejudices of a popish education, and in an age of darkness and ignorance, should have had strength of mind to perceive the odious nature and pernicious effects of the above stated abuses and impositions, and courage in their attempt to correct them—to oppose the most formidable power of the Roman pontiff—must excite our admiration; but it cannot be imagined, that men, who had grown even to the full vigor of manhood, amidst the grossest corruptions, and had deeply imbibed the false principles of the established religion, should at once perceive every false doctrine, and every pernicious abuse which it contained, and be immediately prepared to make a thorough reformation. Unless we admit that these men were inspired, which is not pretended, it cannot be presumed that they at once understood the whole counsel of God, as this is revealed in the scriptures, and immediately purified Christianity from all the corruptions introduced by the Papal Church. "It would be strange indeed," to adopt the language of the venerable Robinson, the pastor of the Leyden flock, "if the earliest reformers should have passed from such entire darkness into perfect light, after such darkness had endured for twelve hundred years." Having but imperfectly liberated themselves from monkish superstition and moral servitude, it is not possible that Luther and his fellow laborers should have conformed their institutions to the letter and spirit of the gospel. Theologians, who have been educated under more favorable circumstances, and possess higher means of obtaining a correct knowledge of scripture, and acquiring the requisite knowledge of public teachers, must be in a situation to make improvement on the

first reformers, as it respects articles of Christian faith, modes of public worship, and the forms of Church government and discipline. In fact, the doctrines and principles, which in this age are the subject of controversy and division, had slight, if any, connexion with the corruptions and abuses from which the first reformers relieved protestants.

The agitated, the heated spirit of the sixteenth century, was unfavorable to impartial investigation, to candid inquiry, and to the possession of opinions on speculative subjects, founded on deliberate and sound judgment.

While, then, Christians of the present day venerate the memories, of those great and daring men, who began the reformation from Popery—while they cherish devout gratitude for the religious liberty and the religious blessings of which these men were the primary instruments—let not Christians of this period of greater light and knowledge take them as infallible guides, nor adopt their speculative systems as the body of revealed religion, from which there is no appeal. The systems of Luther, Calvin, and their coadjutors are entitled to honorable notice as the opinions of great, honest, and pious men, who sought the truth in the love of it; but they have not the authority of revelation, and are to be received only as, on due examination, they are found conformable to the sacred oracles.—While we avail ourselves of every advantage which the noble exertions of the reformers have secured to us, let us not view them as the standard of perfection, and suppose that we must cease from further inquiry after the truths pertaining to eternal life, and rest our Christian faith and hope on their attainments. All the light with which they were favored, shines around us; and many and great advantages are afforded us, which were denied to them. We must account for all the talents committed to our management. Our progress, then, in Christian knowledge, and Christian life, should correspond to the means of general improvement with which we are favored. The authority for the doctrines we believe should be drawn from the sacred scriptures, not from the creed of Luther, Zuinglius, or Calvin. Christ is the only law-giver in his kingdom. The scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith. Every intelligent Christian forms his opinions of revealed truths from an impartial and diligent study of them.

Dr. Bancroft.

ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

(Continued from page 134.)

2. *Jesus died to teach his followers how to bear suffering.*

ALL the dispensations of divine providence, all the dangerous situations in which we are ever placed, all the temptations which start up and oppose us in our way to heaven, all the calamities, privations, and disappointments, depression, evil and pain, through which we are compelled to make our way, have for their object nothing but our own improvement. They come upon us in mercy.—They assist us in performing the task for which we live—the formation of a perfect, spotless character. They draw forth our powers and strengthen them. They save us from the torpors of continual ease. They teach us what we are and what the world is. They teach us to retire into ourselves and rest upon the vigor of our own minds, and look upward to the source of light and be at peace, though all without us may be darkness, and the thunder may roar over us, and the storm burst upon our heads.

Now it became the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, the being who was to be our example, the standard by means of which we were to act rightly in every possible situation, it became him to make his own character perfect through sufferings. It was necessary that he should feel the power of temptation, the bitterness of bodily and mental anguish, or he could have been no pattern for the multitudes of his followers, upon whom the hand of God has fallen heavily. It was right that he should exhibit himself meek humble and patient, resigned to the will of God, ready to endure as well as to act, ready to obey without reluctance and without a murmur, ready to live or die as should be most conducive to the honor of his father, and the good of mankind. His was a glorious example; and let us learn from it, neither to hope nor to wish for a life of unruffled calmness and felicity. Wretched is that man's fate, who has never known adversity; whose life is one long dream of indolence, whose energy no danger has ever roused, whose thoughts and affections no disappointments have ever torn from this world, whose heart no shocks of misfortunes have elevated to heaven. How languid are the virtues of such a being, how unqualified for noble exertions, how unfit to struggle for the

Christian's crown! Ease, dull ease has waved over him her leaden sceptre. Her influence has reached his heart. It presses him down to earth. It destroys the vigor of his faculties. It quenches all his ardor. He neither soars, nor aims, nor looks above the world. Let us rather bless God, when he teaches us by the rod of affliction to feel that this world is not our home, that we are placed here only to act our part and then to die. Let us learn to stand erect and fearless amid the buffetings of the world, looking for an example to him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself—the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame and is now seated at the right hand of God.

S. C.

SERIOUSNESS IN RELIGION.

Seriousness in religion, is utterly inconsistent with any affectation or grimace. It is not a thing to be assumed at our pleasure. It does not consist in a pharisaical disfiguring of our faces, in studied attitudes and sepulchral tones. It is not a matter of deportment merely, but of feeling, which of course will affect the deportment. It is indeed what it is difficult to describe precisely; but what every one, who will reflect may understand. In the common affairs of life, we all know what is intended when we say, of a man that he is *in earnest*; and being serious in our religion is being in earnest in our religion. Seriousness and solemnity are often confounded; and yet they are different; for solemnity relates wholly to our manners.—It is not uncommon to find men who are very solemn in all the outward services of religion, who yet by a disgraceful indecency, or levity of conversation and manners, show that they have not the fear of God before their eyes; and on the other hand, we meet with others, whose life and character satisfy you that they are what they profess to be, and who, blessed by God with distinguished wit or a superabundant flow of animal spirits, carry into society that inoffensive vivacity and chastened mirth, which stir the waters of friendship, and quicken all their healing virtues; and impress men more sensibly with the goodness of God in having made them social beings.

A minister to be serious must be in earnest. In the public services of religion he should indeed be solemn as well as serious: but this should not be a solemnity assumed for the sake of mere stage-effect. He should ap-

pear in that natural, simple, unostentatious manner, which sincerity always wears; so that men may say and think of him, that he is honest—that he feels what he utters, and is himself impressed with that which he urges on others. Nothing of this sort is to be put on for the occasion; and such is the imperfect nature of man, so much is he under the influence of external circumstances, that the acquisition and maintenance of this temper will depend much upon cultivation, reflection, habitual devotion, and upon the severe discipline of the mind and affections.

Colman's Sermon on Pastoral Duty.

ON GAINING THE FAVOR OF GOD.

VAIN and absurd is every scheme in life, that is not subservient to, and does not terminate in that great end of our being, the attainment of excellence and the favor of God. Whenever this becomes sincerely our object, then will pride and vanity, envy, ambition, covetousness, and every evil lose their power over us, and we shall, in the language of scripture, "Walk humbly with our God." We shall then cease to repine under our natural or accidental disadvantages, and feel dissatisfied only with our moral defects; we shall love and respect all our fellow creatures as the children of the same dear parent, and particularly those who seek to do his will;—we shall wish to cultivate good will, and to promote innocent enjoyment wherever we are; we shall strive to please, not from vanity, but from benevolence. Instead of contemplating our own fancied perfections, or even real superiority, with self complacence, religion will teach us to look into ourselves and fear.

Mrs. Chapone.

Extract from Rev. D. Huntington's Poem on the pleasures & advantages of true Religion.

Seest thou yon lonely cottage in the grove—
With little garden neatly plan'd before—
Its roof, deep shaded by the elms above,
Moss-grown and deck'd with velvet verdure
o'er?

Go, lift the willing latch—the scene explore—
Sweet peace, and love, and joy, thou there
shalt find:

For there Religion dwells whose sacred lore
Leaves the proud wisdom of the world behind,
And pours a heav'nly ray on every humble
mind.

When the bright morning gilds the eastern
skies,

Up springs the peasant from his calm repose :
Forth to his honest toil he cheerful hies,
And tastes the sweets of nature as he goes —
But first, of Sharon's fairest, sweetest Rose,
He breathes the fragrance, and pours forth
the praise :

Looks to the source whence ev'ry blessing
flows,

Ponders the page which heav'nly truth con-
veys,

And to its Author's hand commits his future
ways.

Nor yet in solitude his prayers ascend :
His faithful partner and their blooming train,
The precious word with rev'rent minds at-
tend,

The Heav'n-directed path of life to gain.
Their voices mingle in the grateful strain —

The lay of love and joy together sing,
To him whose bounty clothes the smiling
plain,

Who spreads the beauties of the blooming
spring,

And tunes the warbling throats that make the
vallies ring.

DAILY PRAYER.

From Christian Disciple.

THE scriptures of the old and new Testa-
ments agree in enjoining prayer. Let no
man call himself a Christian, who lives with-
out giving a part of life to this duty. We are
not taught how often we must pray ; but our
Lord in teaching us to say, "Give us *this day*
our daily bread," implies that we should pray
daily. He has even said to us "pray al-
ways ;" an injunction to be explained indeed
with that latitude which many of his precepts
require, but which is not to be satisfied, we
think, without regular and habitual devotion.
As to the particular hours to be given to
this duty every Christian may choose them
for himself. Our religion is too liberal and
spiritual to bind us to any place or any hour
of prayer. But there are parts of the day
particularly favorable to this duty, and which
if possible should be redeemed for it. On
these we shall offer a few reflections.

The *first* of these periods is the *morning*,
which even nature seems to have pointed out
to men of different religions, as a fit time for

offerings to the Divinity. In the morning our
minds are not so much shaken by worldly
cares and pleasures, as in other parts of the
day. Retirement and sleep have helped to
allay the violence of our feelings, to calm the
feverish excitement so often produced by in-
tercourse with men. The hour is a still one.
The hurry and tumults of life are not begun,
and we naturally share in the tranquility
around us. Having for so many hours lost
our hold on the world, we can banish it the
more easily from the mind, and worship with-
less divided attention. This then is a favora-
ble time for approaching the invisible Author
of our being, for strengthening the intimacy
of our minds with him, for thinking upon a fu-
ture life, and for seeking those spiritual aids
which we need in the labors and temptations
of every day.

In the morning there is much to feed the
spirit of devotion. It offers an abundance of
thoughts, friendly to pious feeling. When we
look on creation, what a happy and touching
change do we witness. A few hours past the
earth was wrapt in gloom and silence. There
seemed "a pause in nature." But now, a
new flood of light has broken forth, and cre-
ation rises before us in fresher and brighter
hues, and seems to rejoice as if it had just re-
ceived birth from its Author. The sun nev-
er sheds more cheerful beams, and never pro-
claims more loudly God's glory and goodness,
than when he returns after the coldness and
dampness of night, and awakens man and in-
ferior animals to the various purposes of their
being. A spirit of joy seems breathed over
the earth and through the sky. It requires
little effort of imagination to read delight in
the kindled clouds, or in the fields bright with
dew. This is the time, when we can best
feel and bless the Power which said, "let
there be light ;" which "set a tabernacle for
the sun in the heavens," and made him the
dispenser of fruitfulness and enjoyment
through all regions.

If we next look at ourselves, what materi-
als does the morning furnish for devout
thought. At the close of the past day, we
were exhausted by our labors, and unable to
move without wearisome effort. Our minds
were sluggish, and could not be held to the
most interesting objects. From this state of
exhaustion, we sunk gradually into entire
insensibility. Our limbs became motionless ;
our senses were shut as in death. Our
thoughts were suspended, or only wandered

confusedly and without aim. Our friends, and the universe, and God himself were forgotten. And what a change does the morning bring with it! On waking we find, that sleep, the image of death, has silently infused into us a new life. The weary limbs are braced again. The dim eye has become bright and piercing. The mind is returned from the region of forgetfulness to its old possessions. Friends are met again with a new interest. We are again capable of devout sentiment, virtuous effort, and Christian hope. With what subjects of gratitude then does the morning furnish us? We can hardly recal the state of insensibility from which we have just emerged, without a consciousness of our dependence, or think of the renovation of our powers and intellectual being, without feeling our obligation to God. There is something very touching in the consideration, if we will fix our minds upon it; that God thought of us when we could not think; that he watched over us when we had no power to avert peril from ourselves; that he continued our vital motions, and in due time broke the chains of sleep, and set our imprisoned faculties free. How fit is it at this hour to raise to God the eyes which he has opened, and the arm which he has strengthened; to acknowledge his providence; and to consecrate to him the powers he has renewed? How fit that he should be the first object of the thoughts and affections which he has restored! How fit to employ in his praise the tongue he has loosed, and the breath which he has spared!

But the morning is a fit time for devotion, not only from its relation to the past night, but considered as the introduction of a new day. To a thinking mind, how natural at this hour are such reflections as the following:—I am now to enter on a new period of my life, to start afresh in my course. I am to return to that world, where I have often gone astray; to receive impressions which may never be effaced; to perform actions which will never be forgotten; to strengthen a character, which will fit me for heaven or hell. I am this day to meet temptations which have often subdued me; I am to be entrusted again with opportunities of usefulness, which I have often neglected. I am to influence the minds of others, to help in moulding their characters, and in deciding the happiness of their present and future life. How uncertain is this day! What unseen dangers are before me! What unexpected

changes may await me! It may be my last day! It will certainly bring me nearer to death and judgment!—Now when entering on a period of life so important, yet so uncertain, how fit and natural is it, before we take the first step, to seek the favor of that Being on whom the lot of every day depends, to commit all our interests to his almighty and wise providence, to seek his blessing on our labors, and his succor in temptation, and to consecrate to his service the day which he raises upon us. This morning devotion, not only agrees with the sentiments of the heart, but tends to make the day happy, useful and virtuous. Having cast ourselves on the mercy and protection of the Almighty, we shall go forth with new confidence to the labors and duties which he imposes. Our early prayer will help to shed an odor of piety through the whole life. God having first occupied, will more easily recur to our mind. Our first step will be in the right path, and we may hope a happy issue.

So fit and useful is morning devotion, it ought not to be omitted without necessity. If our circumstances will allow the privilege, it is a bad sign, when no part of the morning is spent in prayer. If God find no place in our minds at that early and peaceful hour, he will hardly recur to us in the tumults of life. If the benefits of the morning do not soften us, we can hardly expect the heart to melt with gratitude through the day. If the world then rush in, and take possession of us, when we are at some distance and have had a respite from its cares, how can we hope to shake it off, when we shall be in the midst of it, pressed and agitated by it on every side. Let a part of the morning, if possible, be set apart to devotion; and to this end we should fix the hour of rising, so that we may have an early hour at our own disposal. Our piety is suspicious, if we can renounce, as too many do, the pleasures and benefits of early prayer, rather than forego the senseless indulgence of unnecessary sleep. What! we can rise early enough for business. We can even anticipate the dawn, if a favorite pleasure or an uncommon gain requires the effort. But we cannot rise that we may bless our great Benefactor, that we may arm ourselves for the severe conflicts to which our principles are to be exposed. We are willing to rush into the world, without thanks offered or a blessing sought. From a day thus begun, what ought we to expect but thoughtlessness and guilt.